SELECTIONS

FROM THE

VERNACULAR NEWSPAPERS

PUBLISHED IN THE

PUNJAB, NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES, OUDH, AND CENTRAL PROVINCES,

Received up to 17th February, 1872.

POLITICAL (DOMESTIC).

THE Aina-i-Aib-i-Numá-i-Hind, of the 27th January, dwells on the tyranny and oppression practised by the reigning chief of Nabha on the widows and other relatives of the late rajah. He has confiscated the jagheers and tenements belonging to them, and scarcely allows them even the bare necessaries of life. But his cruel and ungenerous treatment of the unfortunate family does not stop here. He inflicts indignities on them in various ways, and has taken up his residence in the same palace with them. About two months ago, he freely entered the female apartments without giving notice, to the great mortification of the widowed ladies, who did not wish to survive this disgrace, and would have certainly put an end to their existence had not the thought of suicide being a sin prevailed. As their only plan for preserving their honour and chastity, they shut themselves up in a room, and remained in this state for five days without food and drink. The people of Nabha were so much grieved on hearing this that they refused food the whole day, as if it were the day of the funeral of the late rajah.

The attention of Government is invited to the pitiable condition of the ladies, and it is advised to take the following steps in order to deliver them from the oppressions of Rajah Heera Singh.

- (a) The rajah should be strictly prohibited from residing in the harem of his predecessor, and should be directed to keep his family in a separate house, in order that the privacy of the widowed ranees may not be disturbed.
- (b) The jagheers and tenements of the ladies should be restored to them, and such of them as had no jagheers in the time of the late chief should be suitably provided for by Government.
- (c) A special trustworthy officer should be appointed to make such representations to Government on the part of the ladies as may be necessary from time to time, without the intervention of the rajah.

A correspondent of the same paper complains of a peculiar kind of extortion practised on passengers at the Lahore and Mooltan Railway Stations. Ticket-clerks, at the time of distributing tickets, refuse to return change, telling passengers that they must get it from the banker outside, who insists on charging three pies per rupee as discount, on the plea of his having secured the monopoly of the exchange from Government for a sum of money. Passengers, being in urgent need, must submit to the extortionate demand. The writer regrets that there should be no limit to the shifts and expedients by which railway employés exact money from the people.

A correspondent of the same paper, of the 3rd February, prefers complaints against the khansama of Captain Stone, District Superintendent of Police, Montgomery, for taking unwarrantable liberties, and practising extortions on the people of the whole district in a variety of ways. He has so much influence that police employés of all ranks and grades, subordinate to the Superintendent, yield implicit obedience to his orders, and dare not oppose his will, but tamely yield to his requests. Though getting only Rs. 10 per mensem, his expenses are ten times as much. He indulges in a course of debauchery, and keeps two prostitutes, one of whom lives in Montgomery, and the other in Pakputtun. These prostitutes are tyrants in

their own spheres, especially the latter, for whom the khansama has secured a house in a mobulla of the city inhabited by gentlemen, who suffer great annoyance on account of persons of a profligate character frequenting the place; but, nevertheless, cannot turn her out. One of the inhabitants even submitted a petition to the authorities of the district praying for her removal, but no notice was taken of it.

The khansama's way of making money is chiefly this. When out with his master on tour, he lords it over the zemindars and shopkeepers of each place, and compels them to satisfy his demands. In case of any one of them failing to yield compliance, he invents false charges against him. The zemindar is blamed for having failed to supply milk, grass, or other things, and the bunneah for his supply of rations being short of the demand. By such shifts he collects five rupees per head from lumberdars and similar presents, in addition to four annas per diem from shopkeepers. Similar extortions are practised on police employés, from Rs. 30 to Rs. 40 being exacted from each Sub-Deputy Inspector as a bribe.

The writer thinks it a great pity that Captain Stone should take no notice of these grievances, and should suffer a menial of his to wrong the people in the ways mentioned.

The same paper publishes a petition from the sweepers of Lahore, complaining that Meer Sahib, the present conservancy contractor, practises great severities towards them. While two, four, and eight annas per ass monthly were charged by his predecessors, he has raised the rate to ten annas, and treats both men and women in a very cruel and disgraceful manner. If Government allowed the petitioners to go round the city with their asses till 10 a.m. in the morning and 3 p.m. in the evening, there could be a possibility of their bearing the burden of the increased rate; but in the absence of such indulgence, the demand is very oppressive indeed. Government is asked to attend to the grievance, and take compassion on the unfortunate men.

The Márwar Gazette, of the 5th February, is glad to find that the attention of the Government of Marwar has been directed to the complaints of robberies noticed in the late numbers of that paper, and steps have been taken for tracing A special official—Mehta Vijai Singh—has been nominated for the purpose, whose exertions have been so far successful that a portion of the robbed property has been found, and some thirty or forty dacoits, including the robbers concerned in the serious case of dacoity which occurred at the frontiers of the village of Kakanee, have been apprehended. These are all under confinement, and a search is being made for the rest of the badmashes, who, it is hoped, will all be found out. The writer regrets to observe that the offenders arrested consist chiefly of persons of the Baoree caste, living in the villages of refractory jagheerdars, and thinks it a matter of great pity that, by giving protection to professional thieves in their estates, the latter should put the Maharajah to so much trouble in checking crime. The jagheerdars had at one time entered into an engagement with the Government promising to exclude Baorees from their possessions to the last man, and it looks surprising that they should not adhere to their promise.

The Akmal-ul-Akhbár, of the 7th February, in its column of local news, asserts that a case of theft has occurred in the city (Delhi) at the house of a mahajun named Bakhtawur Singh. The loss was Rs. 3,000 in cash.

The Jalwa-i-Túr, of the 8th February, learns from the "Madras Times" that a considerable reduction has been made in the number of chuprassees employed in the Almorah Jail, and the saving thus effected has been utilized in securing the services of a Sergeant-Major on a salary of Rs. 1,200 per mensem. The editor disapproves of the plan, and is of opinion that the chuprassees should have been retained, and an Assistant Sergeant on Rs. 500 monthly been appointed.

The Benares Akhbár, of the same date, refers to the letter from the Civil and Sessions Judge of Benares to the address

of the editor of that paper, requesting him to mention the names of the gentlemen alluded to in the article in one of his issues on the abuses of courts, who are stated to have bribed officials, in order to ensure their deliverance from a case falsely imputed to them (vide p. 676, para. 1, of the Selections for the week ending 25th November last). In compliance with the request, the editor communicated the particulars of the case, at which the officer sent for the men concerned in it, and prevailed on them to disclose the names of the officials whom they had bribed.

The editor thanks the Judge for taking so much interest in the matter, and hopes that, now that the crime has been fully brought to light, he will adopt measures for putting an effective stop to it. But while praising the officer for his vigilance in having taken notice of the abuse, he, at the same time, thinks it worth while to comment on the impropriety of calling editors to account for abuses revealed by them. More than once has he had the misfortune to be summoned to court by district officers to furnish explanations regarding complaints inserted in his paper, which is certainly a very bad policy. Besides the disgrace and humiliation attending it, and the trouble of going, and expense of conveyance which have to be incurred, the practice is unwise, inasmuch as it serves to discourage editors from exposing faults and failings in future. The poor men must either remain silent spectators of wrongs and grievances, or if they take upon themselves to represent them, must prepare themselves for the ordeal, and submit to the ungenerous treatment which is sure to await them in the latter case. Either course is unpleasant. To bear the sight of wrongs done unmoved, or to have to appear at a tribunal, is equally unfortunate; and the poor editor finds himself in a It would be enough for officers to gather information from an editor's paper, and conduct inquiries as to the abuses pointed out, without putting the writer to the task of proving what he says. What, for instance, can it avail to ask an editor to prove a case of bribery—a crime so well known

duty to take such steps as may seem most appropriate for checking the evil which it is desirable to remedy. If efficient enquiries be made, and the abuse be fully attended to, and properly watched, it would be no difficult thing to detect, and ultimately check bribery. To require an editor to prove it, is, as it were, to ask him to risk his life. Let him once undertake the task, and he will have many enemies ready to make him suffer the worst consequences. The writer concludes with the remark, that, dangerous as the task of exposing faults is, he would rather sacrifice his life than witness wrongs done without daring to give publicity to them, were it only for his being a well-wisher of Her Majesty's Government.

In support of his position, the editor publishes a letter from a correspondent who subscribes himself as a "Mr. Bribe," in which he is warned against the practice of attempting to disclose cases of bribery and corruption, and is made to understand that it would be nothing but folly in him to try to remove an evil which those who indulge in it will find various means of persevering in.

The same paper learns from the Málwa Akhbar that the Kotwal of Indore refused to assist in quenching a fire which recently broke out in Lodhipura—a place in that city, situated near the old jail, and burnt a bunneah's house and shop, together with the houses of a blacksmith and a Mussulman situated in the vicinity, unless he were paid something for the trouble. The owners had no money with them at the time, and therefore could not meet the demand, and the result was that the Kotwal left them to themselves, and indulged himself in a feast at the house of one Rao Jee Bhao. The editor of the Málwa Akhbár believes that the Maharaja of Indore, on becoming aware of the fact, will not pass over this act of the Kotwal unpunished.

The Lawrence Gazette, of the 9th February, notices the statement made in the Delhi Gazette, on the authority of a

Trichinopoly correspondent, as to an anonymous letter having been received by the Magistrate of that district, threatening him with death for the course taken by him in making enquiries into a case of dispute between two European Officers of the 38th Regiment and certain Hindoostanees.

The editor remarks that, as the practice of addressing mischievous communications of the kind under notice has now become common, it seems proper that in all such cases enquiries be made by the authorities who receive them through the agency of the heads of the different mobullas in their jurisdiction. By this plan the authors of such communications are sure to be traced out, and the abuse will be put a stop to.

The Allygurh Institute Gazette, of the 9th February, criticizes circular No. 55 of 1867, which has been enforced in the North-Western Provinces. The object of the circular is to shield cultivators and shareholders against the oppressions which zemindars found opportunities to exercise on them by wilfully refusing to take the rent at the proper times, with a view to encourage them to spend it; and by thus rendering them unable to pay it on demand, find a pretext for suing them for the same, with the object of depriving them of their cultivating rights, or causing their shares to be put up to sale, and thereby bringing about their ruin. Under the new regime cultivators are empowered, in case of the zemindar or lumberdar declining to receive the rent due, to deposit it in the Government treasury—a notice being given by the court to the latter to enable him to apply for the recovery of such rent. This plan certainly prevents cultivators from being wronged at the hands of zemindars and lumberdars in the ways mentioned above; but at the same time subjects the latter to much loss and inconvenience, besides depriving them of all that control over their ryots which is justly their due in virtue of proprietary right, and enabling the latter to harass them by paying the money into the public treasury, even in cases when the zemindar is willing to receive it and furnish a receipt.

On these grounds, the writer strongly recommends that the circular should be modified in so far as it relates to the deposit of rent in the public treasury. He is of opinion that the money should be paid into tehseels—a receipt being furnished to the payers duly signed by the tehveeldar, the siyahanuvees, and the tehseeldar. This done, steps should be taken to have the money paid to the zemindar, and give information to that effect to the sudder office, care being taken to see that a clear account of the money is kept in the tehseel office, and that payment is delayed on no account longer than a week. Also, in order to ensure regularity and punctuality in the account, tehseeldars should be strictly enjoined to keep a direct control over the receipts and disbursements under this head, and submit the register of such account month by month to pergunnah officers for examination.

A correspondent of the Akhbár-i-Anjuman-i-Panjáb, of the same date, asserts that gambling is remarkably prevalent in the town of Jagadhree in the Umballa District. Even little boys, to say nothing of notorious gamblers, indulge in the practice. They try by various expedients to steal money from their homes in order to indulge in the pastime; or, if they cannot do this, another place is at all times available for procuring money. There are some women in the town who are in the habit of lending money to the urchins to gamble with, on condition of the latter paying it back, together with interest, in the proportion of one-half or one-fourth.

The writer goes on to illustrate the evil consequences of the vice by an example which has recently come to his notice in the city. A bunneah boy of nineteen years of age, after having lost all the money he had, wagered his very clothes, and, losing them, too, thought it a shame to survive the disgrace, and threw himself into a well, where he died. The writer regrets that gambling should be so prevalent in Jagadhree, and impresses on Government the necessity of taking steps for checking it.

The Agra Akhbár, of the 10th February, notices the case of two Afghan burglars, who were recently captured on the spot, together with the implements of burglary, by the Sub-Inspector of Police, Loha-ki-Mundee in the city of Agra, and on being despatched to court under Sections 456 and 511, on the charge of making an attempt at burglary, were sentenced by the Deputy Magistrate to three months' imprisonment. The writer cannot understand why-notwithstanding the charge having been fully proved against the offenders, and their being guilty besides of having resisted the Sub-Inspector when they were seized—such a mild punishment has been inflicted. very well to say that the depositions of the accused were well devised, and witnesses were brought forward by them in proof of their innocence; but there are precautions taken by all professional and city thieves. It is a common thing with them to win over to their interest a certain number of city persons of a good exterior, who take upon themselves to be their sureties for good behaviour, and stand up in their defence whenever there is need. This circumstance, added to the fact of city thieves being experienced in court procedure-unlike those living in villages and forests, who, on account of not knowing how to plead for them, are easily prevailed upon to confess their guilt-often turns the day in their favour, and ought to be guarded against. There are several Affghans of this description in the city, who come to India on pretence of selling fruits, but in reality in order to commit thefts and other crimes. These should be strictly watched, and, on the least suspicion being found against them, should be duly punished.

"The Rohilkhund Akhbár, of the same date, under the heading "Nowgong," notices a new order said to have been enforced relating to parcels, &c., despatched by pamphlet, book, and pattern posts, viz., that in future such parcels should not be registered in the post-office, nor the names of the addressees taken down in the despatch book, but should be despatched without being entered in the post-office books, and delivered to the addressees without a receipt being taken from them, just

as letters are. The writer strongly objects to the system, which, he says, will prove a fruitful source of mischief. It will be the cause of parcels being lost or misdelivered as letters now are, and, by freeing postal employés from all responsibility as to their safe despatch and delivery, will open a door for embezzlement. In this way the plan, while it will only save the post-office the trouble of writing down a few words, will cause a loss of thousands of rupees to the people.

For these reasons the writer suggests that the old rule should be restored.

The Panjabi Akhbar, of the same date, learns from the Delhi Gazette that a new order has recently been issued by the Government of India, directing that a tax should be levied on all mausoleums and cemeteries, and that the money thus raised be deposited in Government treasuries, and spent from time to time in the repair and improvement of those places under the supervision of missionaries or Engineers of the Public Works Department. The Delhi Gazette approves of the order, and remarks that, by this arrangement, the protection now afforded by Government to the living will likewise be extended to the dead.

The editor of the Panjábí Akhbár thinks differently. He is of opinion that the measure, though good in itself, and intended rather for the benefit of the people than Government, will reflect discredit on its authors. The people of India have not yet attained to such a high degree of civilization as to appreciate taxes of this kind. When they have gained such perfection, they will themselves devise schemes such as the one in question, and voluntarily come forward to spend money on them.

The Koh-i-Núr, of the same date, reports the prevalence of small-pox in Loodhiana.

The same paper asserts that thefts have now become as frequent in Dera Ghazee Khan as they are in Goojranwalla.

In its correspondence the same paper mentions the appearance of an aurora borealis in several cities of the Punjab, which has caused much consternation and alarm among the people, who believe the phenomenon to be a portentous omen.

The Kárnámah, of the 12th February, in its column of local news, again draws the attention of the authorities of Lucknow to the bad practice of riding and driving furiously through the streets, which is a source of much trouble and inconvenience to the people. A case recently happened in Victoria Street. At sunset, a gentleman was seen driving so quickly that a lady who was passing in a doolie at the time, as well as the bearers carrying it, narrowly escaped from being grievously hurt. The driver, however, was so far from taking any notice of what happened as to lash the horses and move on with greater speed, and was soon out of sight. Incidents such as this commonly happen, and, unless the authorities direct their attention to the abuse, there is no knowing to what extent the persons and lives of the people will suffer.

The Oudh Akhbár, of the 13th February, dwells on the bad practice of mixing water with milk, and the evils resulting from it. It is remarked that adulterated milk is extremely injurious to health and causes catarrh, cough, flux, and various other diseases. Government is asked to take due steps for prohibiting its sale.

In its correspondence the same paper notices the prevalence of small-pox in Burhanpore, which is said to have caused much loss of life. From the middle of January to the present time 150 children have fallen victims to the disease, while numerous deaths occur from day to day. Other kinds of diseases also prevail in the city.

In its summary of news, the same paper states that cholera has again made its appearance in Nassick, which will add to the distress already suffered by the people in consequence of famine and the scarcity of water.

The Núr-ul-Absúr, of the 15th February, has another article on the Allahabad Mágh Fair, in which the writer again deplores the declining state of the fair year by year. As before, this is attributed to the heavy taxes levied by Government on the occasion. Some of these have already been brought to notice (vide pp. 29-32 of the Selections for the week ending 20th January last), and the writer now confines his remarks to the taxes levied from merchants and shopkeepers. It is remarked that a contract for the sale of each and all things is given to particular individuals for certain sums of money, which is the chief cause of their being sold at exorbitant prices. As examples, it is mentioned that the monopoly of the sale of oil was this year given to an oilman for Rs. 150; while money changers were charged Rs. 50 per head, and so on. A similar tax is raised in the shape of shop-rent, the rate being four or five rupees for each cubit of ground occupied. These various imposts, besides being very oppressive und discouraging to merchants, are injurious in giving pretexts to the latter to charge very high prices on pilgrims for the things sold. The writer remarks that, if this state of things continues, the fair will decline year by year, till it dwindles into insignificance.

EDUCATIONAL.

A correspondent of the Urdú Akhbár, of the 8th February, complains that in the examination of the elementary and middle-class hulkabundee schools in Tehseel Hafizabad, in the Goojranwalla District, held on the 15th January, unfair means were employed by some teachers, who, with the countenance of the head examiner, managed to communicate the answers to the questions put to their pupils. Similar unfairness was practised in adding up the numbers of the examinees at the conclusion of the test. The writer sees no use of examinations of this kind, and is of opinion that they cause much unnecessary waste of time without any corresponding good coming out of them.

It is added that the scale of salaries of teachers of hulkabundee schools in this district is lower than that obtaining in schools of a similar description in the other districts of the Punjab—an inequality which the writer cannot account for.

The system of requiring the teachers to attend tehseelees, which are often several miles distant from the place of their duties, to receive their pay, is also objected to, as one which not only subjects them to much trouble and inconvenience, but is injurious to the public service by causing the schools to remain closed for a week or so in every month. In order to avoid these drawbacks, the writer recommends that the teacher's pay should be distributed by a tehseel chuprassee at their villages.

The Kavi Vachan Sudhá, of the 9th February, refers to the dispute which ensued in the Benares College on the 27th January, or the day preceding the Ganeshchauth, or Sankatá Chaturthi (the Hindu festival annually held in the month of Magh and sacred to Ganesh). The collegians submitted an application to the Principal praying to be allowed a holiday on the day of the festival. This had not the headmaster's signature on it, and was therefore sent to that officer for report, who wrote to the following effect:-"This is the first time I have heard of there being such a holiday as Sankatá Chaturthi. No important ceremonies are observed among the people on this day." The editor wonders that Pundit Mathura Prasad should have been so long living at Benares, and yet not have heard the name of the holiday in question till now; and remarks that, to the best of his knowledge it is a day on which a fair is held, and a large number of Hindoos keep a fast.

The Rokilkhund Akhbár, of the 10th February, has been informed that the mansion of the Nawab of Rampore situated at Bareilly, which was recently endowed by His Highness for a mission school, has been sold by the missionary in charge, who has run away with the money. The Nawab intends to repurchase the building for his own use.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The Kárnámah, of the 12th February, publishes the prospectus of a Pleaders' Society (Anjuman-i-Wukalá), which has been established in Lucknow. The object is to teach pleaders how to make themselves really useful to their countrymen, to instil into their minds the principles of virtue and morality, and to impress on them the necessity of making a right use of their profession in upholding the cause of justice.

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Rohilkhund Akhbar	Akhbár	:	Ditto,	:	Moradabad,	:	Ditto,	, 10th	15th
Ditto San	Ditto Samáchar Patr.	:	Hindee,	:	Ditto,	:	Ditto	. 10th	15th
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Kárnámah			Ditto.	:	Lucknow.	:	Ditto.	12th	17th
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The 6th March, 1872.

SOHAN LALL,
Offg. Govt. Reporter on the Vernacular Press of Upper India.